AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

SLAVE TRADE

ON THE

COAST OF AFRICA,

BY

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LATE SURGEON IN THE AFRICAN TRADE.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE following ſheets are intended to lay before the publick the preſent ſtate of a branch of the Britiſh commerce, which, ever ſince its exiſtence, has been held in deteſtation by all good men, but at this time more particularly engages the attention of the nation, and is become the object of general reprobation.

Leaving to abler pens to expatiate more at large on the injuſtice and inhumanity of the *Slave Trade*, I ſhall content myſelf with giving ſome account of the hardſhips which the unhappy objects of it undergo, and the cruelties they ſuffer, from the period of their being reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery, to their being diſpoſed of in the Weſt India iſlands; where, I fear, their grievances find little alleviation. At the ſame time, I ſhall treat of a ſubject, which appears not to have been attended to in the manner its importance requires; that is, the ſufferings and loſs of the ſeamen employed in this trade; which, from the intemperature of the climate, the inconveniencies they labour under during the voyage, and

the ſeverity of moſt of the commanders, occaſion the deſtruction of great numbers annually.

And this I ſhall endeavour to do by the recital of a number of facts which have fallen under my own immediate obſervation, or the knowledge of which I have obtained from perſons on whoſe veracity I can depend.

And happy ſhall I eſteem myſelf, if an experience obtained by a ſeries of inquiries and obſervations, made during ſeveral voyages to the coaſt of Africa, ſhall enable me to render any ſervice to a cauſe, which is become the cauſe of every perſon of humanity.

Before I proceed to the methods of obtaining the ſlaves, and their ſubſequent treatment, the treatment of the ſailors, and a conciſe account of the places on the coaſt of Africa, where ſlaves are obtained, (which I purpoſe to annex,) it may not be unneceſſary to give a ſhort ſketch of the uſual proceedings of the ſhips employed in the ſlave trade.

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Proceedings during the Voyage.

ON the arrival of the ſhips at Bonny, and New Calabar, it is cuſtomary for them to unbend the ſails, ſtrike the yards and topmaſts, and begin to build what they denominate *a houſe*. This is effected in the following manner: The ſailors firſt laſh the booms and yards from maſt to maſt, in order to form a *ridge-pole*. About ten feet above the deck, ſeveral ſpars, equal in length to the ridge pole, are next laſhed to the ſtanding rigging, and form a wall-plate. Acroſs the ridge-pole and wall-plate, ſeveral other ſpars or rafters are afterwards laid and laſhed, at the diſtance of about ſix inches

from each other. On theſe, other rafters or ſpars are laid length-wiſe, equal in extent to the ridge-pole, ſo as to form a kind of lattice or net-work, with interſtices of ſix inches ſquare. The roof is then covered with mats, made of ruſhes of very looſe texture, faſtened together with rope-yarn, and ſo placed, as to lap over each other like tiles. The ſpace between the deck and the wall-plate, is likewiſe encloſed with a kind of lattice, or net-work, formed of ſticks, laſhed acroſs each other, and leaving vacancies of about four inches ſquare. Near the main-maſt, a partition is conſtructed of inch deal boards, which reaches athwart the ſhip. This diviſion is called a *barricado*. It is about eight feet in height, and is made to project near two feet over the ſides of the ſhip. In this barricado there is a door, at which a centinel is placed during the time the negroes are permitted to come upon deck. It ſerves to keep the different ſexes apart; and as there are ſmall holes in it, wherein blunderbuſſes are fixed, and ſometimes a cannon, it is found very convenient for quelling the inſurrections that now and then happen. Another door is made in the lattice or net-work at the ladder, by which you enter the ſhip. This door is guarded by a centinel during the day, and is locked at night. At the head of the ſhip there is a third door, for the

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uſe of the ſailors, which is ſecured in the ſame manner as that at the gang-way. There is alſo in the roof a large trap-door, through which the goods intended for barter, the water caſks, &c. are hoiſted out or in.

The deſign of this houſe is to ſecure thoſe on board from the heat of the ſun, which in this latitude is intenſe, and from the wind and rain, which at particular ſeaſons, are likewiſe extremely violent. It anſwers theſe purpoſes however but very ineffectually. The ſlight texture of the mats admits both the wind and the rain, whenever it happens to be violent, though at the ſame time, it increaſes the heat of the ſhip to a very pernicious degree, eſpecially between decks. The increaſed warmth occaſioned by this means, together with the ſmoke produced from the green mangrove, (the uſual fire-wood) which, for want of a current of air to carry it off, collects itſelf in large quantities, and infeſts every part of the ſhip, render a veſſel during its ſtay here very unhealthy. The ſmoke alſo, by its acrimonious quality, often produces inflammations in the eyes, which terminates ſometimes in the loſs of ſight.

Another purpoſe for which theſe temporary houſes are erected, is, in order to prevent the purchaſed negroes from leaping overboard. This, the

horrors of their ſituation frequently impel them to attempt; and they now and then effect it, notwithſtanding all the precautions that are taken, by forcing their way through the lattice-work.

The ſlave ſhips generally lie near a mile below the town, in Bonny river, in ſeven or eight fathom water. Sometimes fifteen ſail, Engliſh and French, but chiefly the former, meet here together. Soon after they caſt anchor, the captains go on ſhore, to make known their arrival, and to inquire into the ſtate of the trade. They likewiſe invite the kings of Bonny to come on board, to whom, previous to breaking bulk, they uſually make preſents, (in that country termed *daſhes)* which generally conſiſt of pieces of cloth, cotton, chintz, ſilk handkerchiefs, and other India goods, and ſometimes of brandy, wine, or beer.

When I was at Bonny a few years ago, it was the reſidence of two kings, whoſe names were *Norfolk* and *Peppel.* The houſes of theſe princes were not diſtinguiſhed from the cottages or huts of which the town conſiſts, in any other manner, than by being of ſomewhat larger dimenſions, and ſurrounded with warehouſes, containing European goods, deſigned for the purchaſe of ſlaves. Theſe ſlaves, which the kings procure in the ſame manner as the black traders do theirs, are ſold by them to the

the ſhips. And for every negroe ſold there by the traders, the kings receive a duty, which amounts to a conſiderable ſum in the courſe of a year. This duty is collected by officers, ſtationed on board the ſhips, who are termed *officer boys*; a denomination which it is thought they received from the Engliſh.

The kings of Bonny are abſolute, though elective. They are aſſiſted in the government by a ſmall number of perſons of a certain rank, who ſtile themſelves *Parliament gentlemen*; an office which they generally hold for life. Every ſhip, on its arrival, is expected to ſend a preſent to theſe gentlemen, of a ſmall quantity of bread and beef, and likewiſe to treat them as often as they come on board. When they do this, their approach to the ſhip is announced by blowing through a hollow elephant's tooth, which produces a ſound reſembling that of a poſt-horn.

After the kings have been on board, and have received the uſual preſents, permiſſion is granted by them for trafficking with any of the black traders. When the royal gueſts return from the ſhips, they are ſaluted by the guns.

From the time of the arrival of the ſhips to their departure, which is uſually near three months, ſcarce a day paſſes without ſome negroes being purchaſed, and carried on board; ſometimes in ſmall, and

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ſometimes in larger numbers. The whole number taken on board, depends, in a great meaſure, on circumſtances. In a voyage I once made, our ſtock of merchandize was exhauſted in the purchaſe of about 380 negroes, which was expected to have procured 500. The number of Engliſh and French ſhips then at Bonny, had ſo far raiſed the price of negroes, as to occaſion this difference.

The reverſe (and a *happy* reverſe I think I may call it) was known during the late war. When I was laſt at Bonny, I frequently made inquiries on this head, of one of the black traders, whoſe intelligence I believe I can depend upon. He informed me that only one ſhip had been there for three years during that period; and that was the *Moſeley-Hill*, Captain Ewing, from Liverpool, who made an extraordinary purchaſe, as he found negroes remarkably cheap from the dulneſs of trade. Upon further inquiring of my black acquaintance, what was the conſequence of this decay of their trade, he ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and anſwered, *only making us traders poorer, and obliging us to work for our maintenance.* One of theſe black merchants being informed, that a particular ſet of people, called Quakers, were for aboliſhing the trade, he ſaid, *it was a very bad thing, as they ſhould then be reduced to the ſame ſtate they were in during the war, when, through*

through poverty, they were obliged to dig ground and plant yams.

I was once upon the coaſt of Angola alſo, when there had not been a ſlave ſhip at the river Ambris for five years previous to our arrival, although a place to which many uſually reſort every year; and the failure of the trade for that period, as far as we could learn, had not any other effect, than to reſtore peace and confidence among the natives; which, upon the arrival of any ſhips, is immediately deſtroyed, by the inducement then held forth in the purchaſe of ſlaves. And during the ſuſpenſion of trade at Bonny, as above-mentioned, none of the dreadful proceedings, which are ſo confidently aſſerted to be the natural conſequence of it, were known. The reduction of the price of negroes, and the poverty of the black traders, appear to have been the only *bad* effects of the diſcontinuance of trade; the *good* ones were, *moſt probably*, the reſtoration of peace and confidence among the natives, and a ſuſpenſion of kidnapping.

When the ſhips have diſpoſed of all their merchandize in the purchaſe of negroes, and have laid in their ſtock of wood, water, and yams, they prepare for ſailing, by getting up the yards and topmaſts, reeving the running rigging, bending the ſails, and by taking down the temporary houſe.

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They then drop down the river, to wait for a favourable opportunity to paſs over the bar, which is formed by a number of ſand-banks lying acroſs the mouth of the river, with navigable channels between them. It is not uncommon for ſhips to get upon the bar, and ſometimes they are loſt.

The firſt place the ſlave ſhips touch at in their paſſage to the Weſt-Indies, is either the Iſland of St. Thomas, or Princes Iſland, where they uſually carry their ſick on ſhore, for the benefit of the air, and likewiſe repleniſh their ſtock of water. The former of theſe iſlands is nearly circular, being one hundred and twenty miles round, and lies exactly under the equator, about forty-five leagues from the African continent. It abounds with wood and water, and produces Indian corn, rice, fruits, ſugar, and ſome cinnamon. The air is rather prejudicial to an European conſtitution, nevertheleſs it is well peopled by the Portugueſe. Princes Iſland, which is much ſmaller, lies in one deg. 30 min. north latitude, and likewiſe produces Indian corn, and a variety of fruits and roots, beſides ſugar canes. Black cattle, hogs, and goats are numerous there; but it is infeſted with a miſchievous and dangerous ſpecies of monkeys.

During one of the voyages I made, I was landed upon the Iſland of St. Thomas, with near one hundred

dred ſick negroes, who were placed in an old houſe, taken on purpoſe for their reception. Little benefit however accrued from their going on ſhore, as ſeveral of them died there, and the remainder continued nearly in the ſame ſituation as when they were landed, though our continuance was prolonged for about twelve days, and the iſland is deemed upon the whole healthy.

Upon the arrival of the ſlave ſhips in the Weſt-Indies, a day is ſoon fixed for the ſale of their cargoes. And this is done by different modes, and often by one they term a *ſcramble*, of which ſome account will be given, when the ſale of the negroes is treated of.

The whole of their cargoes being diſpoſed of, the ſhips are immediately made ready to proceed to ſea. It is very ſeldom, however, that they are not detained for want of a ſufficient number of ſailors to navigate the ſhip, as this trade may juſtly be denominated the grave of ſeamen. Though the crews of the ſhips upon their leaving England, generally amount to between forty and fifty men, ſcarcely three-fourths, and ſometimes not one-third of the complement ever return to the port from whence they ſailed, through mortality and deſertion; the cauſes of which I ſhall ſpeak of under another head.

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The time during which the ſlave ſhips are abſent from England, varies according to the deſtination of the voyage, and the number of ſhips they happen to meet on the coaſt. To Bonny, or Old and New Calabar, the voyage is uſually performed in about ten months. Thoſe to the Windward and Gold Coaſts, are rather more uncertain, but in general from fifteen to eighteen months.

The Manner in which the Slaves are procured.

AFTER permiſſion has been obtained for *breaking trade*, as it is termed, the captains go aſhore, from time to time, to examine the negroes that are expoſed to ſale, and to make their purchaſes. The unhappy wretches thus diſpoſed of, are bought by the black traders at fairs, which are held for that purpoſe, at the diſtance of upwards of two hundred miles from the ſea coaſt; and theſe fairs are ſaid to be ſupplied from an interior part of the country. Many negroes, upon being queſtioned relative to the places of their nativity, have aſſerted, that they have travelled during the revolution of ſeveral moons, (their uſual method of calculating time) before they have reached the places where they were purchaſed by the black traders. At theſe fairs, which are held at uncertain periods, but generally every ſix weeks, ſeveral thouſands are frequently expoſed to ſale, who had been collected from all parts of the country for a very conſiderable diſtance round. While I was upon the coaſt, during one of voyages I made, the black traders brought down, in different canoes, from twelve to fifteen hundred negroes,

negroes, which had been purchaſed at one fair. They conſiſted chiefly of men and boys, the women ſeldom exceeding a third of the whole number. From forty to two hundred negroes are generally purchaſed at a time by the black traders, according to the opulence of the buyer; and conſiſt of thoſe of all ages, from a month to ſixty years and upwards. Scarce any age or ſituation is deemed an exception, the price being proportionable. Women ſometimes form a part of them, who happen to be ſo far advanced in their pregnancy, as to be delivered during their journey from the fairs to the coaſt; and I have frequently ſeen inſtances of deliveries on board ſhip. The ſlaves purchaſed at theſe fairs are only for the ſupply of the markets at Bonny, and Old and New Calabar.

There is great reaſon to believe, that moſt of the negroes ſhipped off from the coaſt of Africa, are *kidnapped*. But the extreme care taken by the black traders to prevent the Europeans from gaining any intelligence of their modes of proceeding; the great diſtance inland from whence the negroes are brought; and our ignorance of their language, (with which, very frequently, the black traders themſelves are equally unacquainted) prevent our obtaining ſuch information on this head as we could wiſh. I have, however, by means of occaſional inquiries,

inquiries, made through interpreters, procured ſome intelligence relative to the point, and ſuch, as I think, puts the matter beyond a doubt.

From theſe I ſhall ſelect the following ſtriking inſtances:—While I was in employ on board one of the ſlave ſhips, a negroe informed me, that being one evening invited to drink with ſome of the black traders, upon his going away, they attempted to ſeize him. As he was very active, he evaded their deſign, and got out of their hands. He was, however, prevented from effecting his eſcape by a large dog, which laid hold of him, and compelled him to ſubmit. Theſe creatures are kept by many of the traders for that purpoſe; and being trained to the inhuman ſport, they appear to be much pleaſed with it.

I was likewiſe told by a negroe woman, that as ſhe was on her return home, one evening, from ſome neighbours, to whom ſhe had been making a viſit by invitation, ſhe was kidnapped; and, notwithſtanding ſhe was big with child, ſold for a ſlave. This tranſaction happened a conſiderable way up the country, and ſhe had paſſed through the hands of ſeveral purchaſers before ſhe reached the ſhip. A man and his ſon, according to their own information, were ſeized by profeſſed kidnappers, while they were planting yams, and ſold for ſlaves. This

likewiſe happened in the interior parts of the country, and after paſſing through ſeveral hands, they were purchaſed for the ſhip to which I belonged.

It frequently happens, that thoſe who kidnap others, are themſelves, in their turns, ſeized and ſold. A negroe in the Weſt-Indies informed me, that after having been employed in kidnapping others, he had experienced this reverſe. And he aſſured me, that it was a common incident among his countrymen.

Continual enmity is thus foſtered among the negroes of Africa, and all ſocial intercourſe between them deſtroyed; which moſt aſſuredly would not be the caſe, had they not theſe opportunities of finding a ready ſale for each other.

During my ſtay on the coaſt of Africa, I was an eye-witneſs of the following tranſaction:—A black trader invited a negroe, who reſided a little way up the country, to come and ſee him. After the entertainment was over, the trader propoſed to his gueſt, to treat him with a ſight of one of the ſhips lying in the river. The unſuſpicious countryman readily conſented, and accompanied the trader in a canoe to the ſide of the ſhip, which he viewed with pleaſure and aſtoniſhment. While he was thus employed, ſome black traders on board, who appeared to be in the ſecret, leaped into the canoe, ſeized the unfortunate

unfortunate man, and dragging him into the ſhip, immediately ſold him.

Previous to my being in this employ, I entertained a belief, as many others have done, that the kings and principal men *breed* negroes for ſale, as we do cattle. During the different times I was in the country, I took no little pains to ſatisfy myſelf in this particular; but notwithſtanding I made many inquiries, I was not able to obtain the leaſt intelligence of this being the caſe, which it is more than probable I ſhould have done, had ſuch a practice prevailed. All the information I could procure, confirms me in the belief, that to *kidnapping*, and to crimes, (and many of theſe fabricated as a pretext) the ſlave trade owes its chief ſupport.

The following inſtance tends to prove, that the laſt mentioned artifice is often made uſe of. Several black traders, one of whom was a perſon of conſequence, and exerciſed an authority ſomewhat ſimilar to that of our magiſtrates, being in want of ſome particular kind of merchandize, and not having a ſlave to barter for it, they accuſed a fiſherman, at the river Ambris, with extortion in the ſale of his fiſh; and as they were intereſted in the deciſion, they immediately adjudged the poor fellow guilty, and condemned him to be ſold. He was accord-

ingly purchaſed by the ſhip to which I belonged, and brought on board.

As an additional proof that kidnapping is not only the general, but almoſt the ſole mode, by which ſlaves are procured, the black traders, in purchaſing them, chuſe thoſe which are the roughеſt and moſt hardy; alledging, that the ſmooth negroes have been *gentlemen*. By this obſervation we may conclude they mean, that nothing but fraud or force could have reduced theſe ſmooth-ſkinned gentlemen to a ſtate of ſlavery.

It may not be here unworthy of remark, in order to prove that the wars among the Africans do not furniſh the number of ſlaves they are ſuppoſed to do, that I never ſaw any negroes with recent wounds; which muſt have been the conſequence, at leaſt with ſome of them, had they been taken in battle. And it being the particular province of the ſurgeon to examine the ſlaves when they are purchaſed, ſuch a circumſtance could not have eſcaped my obſervation. As a farther corroboration, it might be remarked, that on the Gold and Windward Coaſts, where fairs are not held, the number of ſlaves procured at a time are uſually very ſmall.

The preparations made at Bonny by the black traders, upon ſetting out for the fairs which are held up the country, are very conſiderable. From

twenty

twenty to thirty canoes, capable of containing thirty or forty negroes each, are aſſembled for this purpoſe; and ſuch goods put on board them as they expect will be wanted for the purchaſe of the number of ſlaves they intend to buy. When their loading is compleated, they commence their voyage, with colours flying, and muſick playing; and in about ten or eleven days, they generally return to Bonny with full cargoes. As ſoon as the canoes arrive at the trader's landing-place, the purchaſed negroes are cleaned, and oiled with palm-oil; and on the following day they are expoſed to ſale for the captains.

The black traders do not always purchaſe their ſlaves at the ſame rate. The ſpeed with which the information of the arrival of ſhips upon the coaſt is conveyed to the fairs, conſidering it is the intereſt of the traders to keep them ignorant, is really ſurpriſing. In a ſhort time after the ſhips arrive upon the coaſt, eſpecially if ſeveral make their appearance together, thoſe who diſpoſe of the negroes at the fairs are frequently known to increaſe the price of them.

Theſe fairs are not the only means, though they are the chief, by which the black traders on the coaſt are ſupplied with negroes. Small parties of them, from five to ten, are frequently brought to the houſes of the traders, by thoſe who make a

practice of kidnapping; and who are conſtantly employed in procuring a ſupply, while purchaſers are to be found.

When the negroes, whom the black traders have to diſpoſe of, are ſhewn to the European purchaſers, they firſt examine them relative to their age. They then minutely inſpect their perſons, and inquire into the ſtate of their health; if they are afflicted with any infirmity, or are deformed, or have bad eyes or teeth; if they are lame, or weak in their joints, or diſtorted in the back, or of a ſlender make, or are narrow in the cheſt; in ſhort, if they have been, or are afflicted in any manner, ſo as to render them incapable of much labour; if any of the foregoing defects are diſcovered in them, they are rejected. But if approved of, they are generally taken on board the ſhip the ſame evening. The purchaſer has liberty to return on the following morning, but not afterwards, ſuch as upon re-examination are found exceptionable.

The traders frequently beat thoſe negroes which are objected to by the captains, and uſe them with great ſeverity. It matters not whether they are refuſed on account of age, illneſs, deformity, or for any other reaſon. At New Calabar, in particular, the traders have frequently been known to put them to death. Inſtances have happened at that place,

place, that the traders, when any of their negroes have been objected to, have dropped their canoes under the ſtern of the veſſel, and inſtantly beheaded them, in ſight of the captain.

Upon the Windward Coaſt, another mode of procuring ſlaves is purſued; which is, by what they term *boating*; a mode that is very pernicious and deſtructive to the crews of the ſhips. The ſailors, who are employed in this trade, go in boats up the rivers, ſeeking for negroes, among the villages ſituated on the banks of them. But this method is very ſlow, and not always effectual. For, after being abſent from the ſhip during a fortnight or three weeks, they ſometimes return with only from eight to twelve negroes. Numbers of theſe are procured in conſequence of alleged crimes, which, as before obſerved, whenever any ſhips are upon the coaſt, are more productive than at any other period. Kidnapping, however, prevails here.

I have good reaſon to believe, that of one hundred and twenty negroes, which were purchaſed for the ſhip to which I then belonged, then lying at the river Ambris, by far the greater part, if not the whole, were kidnapped. This, with various other inſtances, confirms me in the belief that kidnapping is the fund which ſupplies the thouſands of negroes annually ſold off theſe extenſive Windward, and other Coaſts, where boating prevails.

Treatment of the Slaves.

AS ſoon as the wretched Africans, purchaſed at the fairs, fall into the hands of the black-traders, they experience an earneſt of thoſe dreadful ſufferings which they are doomed in future to undergo. And there is not the leaſt room to doubt, but that even before they can reach the fairs, great numbers periſh from cruel uſage, want of food, travelling through inhoſpitable deſerts, &c. They are brought from the places where they are purchaſed to Bonny, &c. in canoes; at the bottom of which they lie, having their hands tied with a kind of willow twigs, and a ſtrict watch is kept over them. Their uſage in other reſpects, during the time of the paſſage, which generally laſts ſeveral days, is equally cruel. Their allowance of food is ſo ſcanty, that it is barely ſufficient to ſupport nature. They are, beſides, much expoſed to the violent rains which frequently fall here, being covered only with mats that afford but a ſlight defence; and as there is uſually water at the bottom of the canoes, from their leaking, they are ſcarcely ever dry.

Nor do theſe unhappy beings, after they become the property of the Europeans (from whom, as a more civilized people, more humanity might naturally

turally be expected) find their ſituation in the leaſt amended. Their treatment is no leſs rigorous. The men negroes, on being brought aboard the ſhip, are immediately faſtened together, two and two, by hand-cuffs on their wriſts, and by irons rivetted on their legs. They are then ſent down between the decks, and placed in an apartment partitioned off for that purpoſe. The women likewiſe are placed in a ſeparate apartment between decks, but without being ironed. And an adjoining room, on the ſame deck, is beſides appointed for the boys. Thus are they all placed in different apartments.

But at the ſame time, they are frequently ſtowed ſo cloſe, as to admit of no other poſture than lying on their ſides. Neither will the height between decks, unleſs directly under the grating, permit them the indulgence of an erect poſture; eſpecially where there are platforms, which is generally the caſe. Theſe platforms are a kind of ſhelf, about eight or nine feet in breadth, extending from the ſide of the ſhip towards the centre. They are placed nearly midway between the decks, at the diſtance of two or three feet from each deck. Upon theſe the negroes are ſtowed in the ſame manner as they are on the deck underneath.

In each of the apartments are placed three or four large buckets, of a conical form, being near

two

two feet in diameter at the bottom, and only one foot at the top, and in depth about twenty-eight inches; to which, when neceſſary, the negroes have recourſe. It often happens, that thoſe who are placed at a diſtance from the buckets, in endeavouring to get to them, tumble over their companions, in conſequence of their being ſhackled. Theſe accidents, although unavoidable, are productive of continual quarrels, in which ſome of them are always bruiſed. In this diſtreſſed ſituation, unable to proceed, and prevented from getting to the tubs, they deſiſt from the attempt; and, as the neceſſities of nature are not to be repelled, eaſe themſelves as they lie. This becomes a freſh ſource of broils and diſturbances, and tends to render the condition of the poor captive wretches ſtill more uncomfortable. The nuiſance ariſing from theſe circumſtances, is not unfrequently increaſed by the tubs being much too ſmall for the purpoſe intended, and their being uſually emptied but once every day. The rule for doing this, however, varies in different ſhips, according to the attention paid to the health and convenience of the ſlaves by the captain.

About eight o'clock in the morning the negroes are generally brought upon deck. Their irons being examined, a long chain, which is locked to a ring-

ring-bolt, fixed in the deck, is run through the rings of the ſhackles of the men, and then locked to another ring-bolt, fixed alſo in the deck. By this means fifty or ſixty, and ſometimes more, are faſtened to one chain, in order to prevent them from riſing, or endeavouring to eſcape. If the weather proves favourable, they are permitted to remain in that ſituation till four or five in the afternoon, when they are diſengaged from the chain, and ſent down.

The diet of the negroes, while on board, conſiſts chiefly of horſe-beans, boiled to the conſiſtence of a pulp; of boiled yams and rice, and ſometimes of a ſmall quantity of beef or pork. The latter are frequently taken from the proviſions laid in for the ſailors. They ſometimes make uſe of a ſauce, compoſed of palm-oil, mixed with flour, water, and pepper, which the ſailors call *ſlabber-ſauce*. Yams are the favourite food of the Eboe, or Bight negroes, and rice or corn, of thoſe from the Gold and Windward Coaſts; each preferring the produce of their native ſoil.

In their own country, the negroes in general live on animal food and fiſh, with roots, yams, and Indian corn. The horſe-beans and rice, with which they are fed aboard ſhip, are chiefly taken from Europe. The latter, indeed, is ſometimes purchaſed

purchaſed on the coaſt, being far ſuperior to any other.

The Gold Coaſt negroes ſcarcely ever refuſe any food that is offered them, and they generally eat larger quantities of whatever is placed before them, than any other ſpecies of negroes, whom they likewiſe excel in ſtrength of body and mind. Moſt of the ſlaves have ſuch an averſion to the horſe-beans, that unleſs they are narrowly watched, when fed upon deck, they will throw them overboard, or in each other's faces when they quarrel.

They are commonly fed twice a day, about eight o'clock in the morning, and four in the afternoon. In moſt ſhips they are only fed with their *own food* once a day. Their food is ſerved up to them in tubs, about the ſize of a ſmall water bucket. They are placed round theſe tubs in companies of ten to each tub, out of which they feed themſelves with wooden ſpoons. Theſe they ſoon loſe, and when they are not allowed others, they feed themſelves with their hands. In favourable weather they are fed upon deck, but in bad weather their food is given them below. Numberleſs quarrels take place among them during their meals; more eſpecially when they are put upon ſhort allowance, which frequently happens, if the paſſage from the coaſt of Guinea to the Weſt-India iſlands, proves of unuſual

uſual length. In that caſe, the weak are obliged to be content with a very ſcanty portion. Their allowance of water is about half a pint each at every meal. It is handed round in a bucket, and given to each negroe in a pannekin; a ſmall utenſil with a ſtrait handle, ſomewhat ſimilar to a ſauce-boat. However, when the ſhips approach the iſlands with a favourable breeze, they are no longer reſtricted.

Upon the negroes refuſing to take ſuſtenance, I have ſeen coals of fire, glowing hot, put on a ſhovel, and placed ſo near their lips, as to ſcorch and burn them. And this has been accompanied with threats, of forcing them to ſwallow the coals, if they any longer perſiſted in refuſing to eat. Theſe means have generally had the deſired effect. I have alſo been credibly informed, that a certain captain in the ſlave trade poured melted lead on ſuch of the negroes as obſtinately refuſed their food.

Exerciſe being deemed neceſſary for the preſervation of their health, they are ſometimes obliged to dance, when the weather will permit their coming on deck. If they go about it reluctantly, or do not move with agility, they are flogged; a perſon ſtanding by them all the time with a cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand for that purpoſe. Their muſick, upon theſe occaſions, conſiſts of a drum,

ſome-

ſometimes with only one head; and when that is worn out, they do not ſcruple to make uſe of the bottom of one of the tubs before deſcribed. The poor wretches are frequently compelled to ſing alſo; but when they do ſo, their ſongs are generally, as may naturally be expected, melancholy lamentations of their exile from their native country.

The women are furniſhed with beads for the purpoſe of affording them ſome diverſion. But this end is generally defeated by the ſquabbles which are occaſioned, in conſequence of their ſtealing them from each another.

On board ſome ſhips, the common ſailors are allowed to have intercourſe with ſuch of the black women whoſe conſent they can procure. And ſome of them have been known to take the inconſtancy of their paramours ſo much to heart, as to leap overboard and drown themſelves. The officers are permitted to indulge their paſſions among them at pleaſure, and ſometimes are guilty of ſuch brutal exceſſes, as diſgrace human nature.

The hardſhips and inconveniencies ſuffered by the negroes during the paſſage, are ſcarcely to be enumerated or conceived. They are far more violently affected by the ſea-ſickneſs, than the Europeans. It frequently terminates in death, eſpecially among

among the women. But the exclusion of the fresh air is among the most intolerable. For the purpose of admitting this needful refreshment, most of the ships in the slave-trade are provided, between the decks, with five or six air-ports on each side of the ship, of about six inches in length, and four in breadth; in addition to which, some few ships, but not one in twenty, have what they denominate *wind-sails*. But whenever the sea is rough, and the rain heavy, it becomes necessary to shut these, and every other conveyance by which the air is admitted. The fresh air being thus excluded, the negroes rooms very soon grow intolerably hot. The confined air, rendered noxious by the effluvia exhaled from their bodies, and by being repeatedly breathed, soon produces fevers and fluxes, which generally carries off great numbers of them.

During the voyages I made, I was frequently a witness to the fatal effects of this exclusion of the fresh air. I will give one instance, as it serves to convey some idea, though a very faint one, of the sufferings of those unhappy beings whom we wantonly drag from their native county, and doom to perpetual labour and captivity. Some wet and blowing weather having occasioned the port-holes to be shut, and the grating to be covered, fluxes and fevers among the negroes ensued. While they

they were in this ſituation, my profeſſion requiring it, I frequently went down among them, till at length their apartments became ſo extremely hot, as to be only ſufferable for a very ſhort time. But the exceſſive heat was not the only thing that rendered their ſituation intolerable. The deck, that is, the floor of their rooms, was ſo covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in conſequence of the flux, that it reſembled a ſlaughter-houſe. It is not in the power of the human imagination to picture to itſelf a ſituation more dreadful or diſguſting. Numbers of the ſlaves having fainted, they were carried upon deck, where ſeveral of them died, and the reſt were, with great difficulty, reſtored. It had nearly proved fatal to me alſo. The climate was too warm to admit the wearing of any clothing but a ſhirt, and that I had pulled off before I went down; notwithſtanding which, by only continuing among them for about a quarter of an hour, I was ſo overcome with the heat, ſtench, and foul air, that I had nearly fainted; and it was not without aſſiſtance, that I could get upon deck. The conſequence was, that I ſoon after fell ſick of the ſame diſorder, from which I did not recover for ſeveral months.

A cir-

A circumſtance of this kind, ſometimes repeatedly happens in the courſe of a voyage; and often to a greater degree than what has juſt been deſcribed; particularly when the ſlaves are much crowded, which was not the caſe at that time, the ſhip having more than a hundred ſhort of the number ſhe was to have taken in.

This devaſtation, great as it was, ſome few years ago was greatly exceeded on board a Liverpool ſhip. I ſhall particularize the circumſtances of it, as a more glaring inſtance of an inſatiable thirſt for gain, or of leſs attention to the lives and happineſs, even of that deſpiſed and oppreſſed race of mortals, the ſable inhabitants of Africa, perhaps was never exceeded; though indeed ſeveral ſimilar inſtances have been known.

This ſhip, though a much ſmaller ſhip than that in which the event I have juſt mentioned happened, took on board at Bonny, at leaſt ſix hundred negroes; but according to the information of the black traders, from whom I received the intelligence immediately after the ſhip ſailed, they amounted to near *ſeven hundred.* By purchaſing ſo great a number, the ſlaves were ſo crowded, that they were even obliged to lie one upon another. This occaſioned ſuch a mortality among them, that, without meeting with unuſual bad weather, or hav-

ing a longer voyage than common, nearly one half of them died before the ſhip arrived in the Weſt-Indies.

That the publick may be able to form ſome idea of the almoſt incredible ſmall ſpace into which ſo large a number of negroes were crammed, the following particulars of this ſhip are given. According to Leverpool cuſtom ſhe meaſured 235 tons. Her width acroſs the beam, 25 feet. Length between the decks, 92 feet, which was divided into four rooms, thus:

Store room, in which there were not any negroes placed			15 feet
Negroes rooms —	mens room —	about	45 feet
	womens ditto	about	10 feet
	boys ditto	about	22 feet
	Total room for negroes		77 feet

Excluſive of the platform before deſcribed, from 8 to 9 feet in breadth, and equal in length to that of the rooms.

It may be worthy of remark, that the ſhips in this trade, are uſually fitted out to receive only one third women negroes, or perhaps a ſmaller number, which the dimenſions of the room allotted for them, above given, plainly ſhew, but in a greater diſproportion.

One

One would naturally ſuppoſe, that an attention to their own intereſt, would prompt the owners of the Guniea ſhips not to ſuffer the captains to take on board a greater number of negroes than the ſhip would allow room ſufficient for them to lie with eaſe to themſelves, or, at leaſt, without rubbing againſt each other. However that may be, a more ſtriking inſtance than the above, of avarice, completely and deſervedly diſappointed, was ſurely never diſplayed: for there is little room to doubt, but that in conſequence of the expected premium uſually allowed to the captains, of £6 per cent. ſterling on the produce of the negroes, this veſſel was ſo thronged as to occaſion ſuch a heavy loſs.

The place allotted for the ſick negroes is under the half deck, where they lie on the bare planks. By this means, thoſe who are emaciated, frequently have their ſkin, and even their fleſh, entirely rubbed off, by the motion of the ſhip, from the prominent parts of the ſhoulders, elbows, and hips, ſo as to render the bones in thoſe parts quite bare. And ſome of them, by conſtantly lying in the blood and mucus, that had flowed from thoſe afflicted with the flux, and which, as before obſerved, is generally ſo violent as to prevent their being kept clean, have their fleſh much ſooner rubbed off, than thoſe who have only to contend with the mere friction of

the ſhip. The excruciating pain which the poor ſufferers feel from being obliged to continue in ſuch a dreadful ſituation, frequently for ſeveral weeks, in caſe they happen to live ſo long, is not to be conceived or deſcribed. Few, indeed, are ever able to withſtand the fatal effects of it. The utmoſt ſkill of the ſurgeon is here ineffectual. If plaiſters be applied, they are very ſoon diſplaced by the friction of the ſhip; and when bandages are uſed, the negroes very ſoon take them off, and appropriate them to other purpoſes.

The ſurgeon, upon going between decks, in the morning, to examine the ſituation of the ſlaves, frequently finds ſeveral dead; and among the men, ſometimes a dead and living negroe faſtened by their irons together. When this is the caſe, they are brought upon the deck, and being laid on the grating, the living negroe is diſengaged, and the dead are thrown overboard.

It may not be improper here to remark, that the ſurgeons employed in the Guinea trade, are generally driven to engage in ſo diſagreeable an employ by the confined ſtate of their finances. An exertion of the greateſt ſkill and attention could afford the diſeaſed negroes little relief, ſo long as the cauſes of their diſeaſes, namely, the breathing of a putrid atmoſphere, and wallowing in their own excrements, remain. When once the fever and

dyſentery

dyſentery get to any height at ſea, a cure is ſcarcely ever effected.

Almoſt the only means by which the ſurgeon can render himſelf uſeful to the ſlaves, is, by ſeeing that their food is properly cooked, and diſtributed among them. It is true, when they arrive near the markets for which they are deſtined, care is taken to poliſh them for ſale, by an application of the lunar cauſtic to ſuch as are afflicted with the yaws. This, however, affords but a temporary relief, as the diſeaſe moſt aſſuredly breaks out, whenever the patient is put upon a vegetable diet.

It has been aſſerted in favour of the captains in this trade, that the ſick ſlaves are uſually fed from their tables. The great number generally ill at a time, proves the falſity of ſuch an aſſertion. Were even a captain *diſpoſed* to do this, how could he feed half the ſlaves in his ſhip from his own table? for it is well known, that *more than half* are often ſick at a time. Two or three perhaps may be fed.

The loſs of ſlaves, through mortality, ariſing from the cauſes juſt mentioned, are frequently very conſiderable. In the voyage lately referred to (not the Liverpool ſhip before-mentioned) one hundred and five, out of three hundred and eighty, died in the paſſage. A proportion ſeemingly very great, but by no means uncommon. One half, ſome-

times two-thirds, and even beyond that, have been known to periſh. Before we left Bonny River, no leſs than fifteen died of fevers and dyſenteries, occaſioned by their confinement. On the Windward Coaſt, where ſlaves are procured more ſlowly, very few die, in proportion to the numbers which die at Bonny, and at Old and New Calabar, where they are obtained much faſter; the latter being of a more delicate make and habit.

The havock made among the ſeamen engaged in this deſtructive commerce, will be noticed in another part; and will be found to make no inconſiderable addition to the unneceſſary waſte of life juſt repreſented.

As very few of the negroes can ſo far brook the loſs of their liberty, and the hardſhips they endure, as to bear them with any degree of patience, they are ever upon the watch to take advantage of the leaſt negligence in their oppreſſors. Inſurrections are frequently the conſequence; which are ſeldom ſuppreſſed without much bloodſhed. Sometimes theſe are ſucceſsful, and the whole ſhip's company is cut off. They are likewiſe always ready to ſeize every opportunity for committing ſome act of deſperation to free themſelves from their miſerable ſtate; and notwithſtanding the reſtraints under which they are laid, they often ſucceed.

While

While a ſhip, to which I belonged, lay in Bonny River, one evening, a ſhort time before our departure, a lot of negroes, conſiſting of about ten, was brought on board; when one of them, in a favourable moment, forced his way through the network on the larboard ſide of the veſſel, jumped overboard, and was ſuppoſed to have been devoured by the ſharks.

During the time we were there, fifteen negroes belonging to a veſſel from Liverpool, found means to throw themſelves into the river; very few were ſaved; and the reſidue fell a ſacrifice to the ſharks. A ſimilar inſtance took place in a French ſhip while we lay there.

Circumſtances of this kind are very frequent. On the coaſt of Angola, at the river Ambris, the following incident happened:—During the time of our reſiding on ſhore, we erected a tent to ſhelter ourſelves from the weather. After having been there ſeveral weeks, and being unable to purchaſe the number of ſlaves we wanted, through the oppoſition of another Engliſh ſlave veſſel, we determined to leave the place. The night before our departure the tent was ſtruck; which was no ſooner perceived by ſome of the negroe women on board, than it was conſidered as a prelude to our ſailing; and about eighteen of them, when they were ſent between

decks, threw themſelves into the ſea through one of the gun ports; the ſhip carrying guns between decks. They were all of them, however, excepting one, ſoon picked up; and that which was miſſing, was, not long after, taken about a mile from the ſhore.

I once knew a negroe woman, too ſenſible of her woes, who pined for a conſiderable time, and was taken ill of a fever and dyſentery; when declaring it to be her determination to die, ſhe refuſed all food and medical aid, and in about a fortnight after, expired. On being thrown overboard, her body was inſtantly torn to pieces by the ſharks.

The following circumſtance alſo came within my knowledge. A young female negroe, falling into a deſponding way, it was judged neceſſary, in order to attempt her recovery, to ſend her on ſhore, to the hut of one of the black traders. Elevated with the proſpect of regaining her liberty by this unexpected ſtep, ſhe ſoon recovered her uſual chearfulneſs; but hearing, by accident, that it was intended to take her on board the ſhip again, the poor young creature hung herſelf.

It frequently happens that the negroes, on being purchaſed by the Europeans, become raving mad; and many of them die in that ſtate; particularly the women. While I was one day aſhore at Bonny,

..., I ſaw a middle aged ſtout woman, who had been brought down from a fair the preceding day, chained to the poſt of a black trader's door, in a ſtate of furious inſanity. On board a ſhip in Bonny River, I ſaw a young negroe woman chained to the deck, who had loſt her ſenſes, ſoon after ſhe was purchaſed and taken on board. In a former voyage, on board a ſhip to which I belonged, we were obliged to confine a female negroe, of about twenty-three years of age, on her becoming a lunatic. She was afterwards ſold during one of her lucid intervals.

One morning, upon examining the place allotted for the ſick negroes, I perceived that one of them, who was ſo emaciated as ſcarcely to be able to walk, was miſſing, and was convinced that he muſt have gone overboard in the night, probably to put a more expeditious period to his ſufferings. And, to conclude on this ſubject, I could not help being ſenſibly affected, on a former voyage, at obſerving with what apparent eagerneſs a black woman ſeized ſome dirt from off an African yam, and put it into her mouth; ſeeming to rejoice at the opportunity of poſſeſſing ſome of her native earth.

From theſe inſtances I think it may be clearly deduced, that the unhappy Africans are not bereft of the finer feelings, but have a ſtrong attachment

to

to their native country, together with a juſt ſenſe of the value of liberty. And the ſituation of the miſerable beings above deſcribed, more forcibly urges the neceſſity of aboliſhing a trade which is the ſource of ſuch evils, than the moſt eloquent harangue, or perſuaſive arguments could do.

Sale

Sale of the Slaves.

WHEN the ſhips arrive in the Weſt-Indies, (the chief mart for this inhuman merchandize), the ſlaves are diſpoſed of, as I have before obſerved, by different methods. Sometimes the mode of diſpoſal, is that of ſelling them by what is termed a *ſcramble*; and a day is ſoon fixed for that purpoſe. But previous thereto, the ſick, or refuſe ſlaves, of which there are frequently many, are uſually conveyed on ſhore, and ſold at a tavern by vendue, or public auction. Theſe, in general, are purchaſed by Jews and ſurgeons, but chiefly the former, upon ſpeculation, at ſo low a price as five or ſix dollars a head. I was informed by a mulatto woman, that ſhe purchaſed a ſick ſlave at Grenada, upon ſpeculation, for the ſmall ſum of one dollar, as the poor wretch was apparently dying of the flux. It ſeldom happens that any, who are carried aſhore in the emaciated ſtate to which they are generally reduced by that diſorder, long ſurvive their landing. I once ſaw ſixteen conveyed on ſhore, and ſold in the foregoing manner, the whole of whom died before I left the iſland, which was within a ſhort time

time after. Sometimes the captains march their ſlaves through the town at which they intend to diſpoſe of them; and then place them in rows, where they are examined and purchaſed.

The mode of ſelling them by ſcramble having fallen under my obſervation the oftenеſt, I ſhall be more particular in deſcribing it. Being ſome years ago, at one of the iſlands in the Weſt-Indies, I was witneſs to a ſale by ſcramble, where about 250 negroes were ſold. Upon this occaſion all the negroes ſcrambled for bear an equal price; which is agreed upon between the captains and the purchaſers before the ſale begins.

On a day appointed, the negroes were landed, and placed altogether in a large yard, belonging to the merchants to whom the ſhip was conſigned. As ſoon as the hour agreed on arrived, the doors of the yard were ſuddenly thrown open, and in ruſhed a conſiderable number of purchaſers, with all the ferocity of brutes. Some inſtantly ſeized ſuch of the negroes as they could lay hold of with their hands. Others, being prepared with ſeveral handkerchiefs tied together, encircled with theſe as many as they were able. While others, by means of a rope, effected the ſame purpoſe. It is ſcarcely poſſible to deſcribe the confuſion of which this mode of ſelling is productive. It likewiſe cauſes much

much animoſity among the purchaſers, who, not unfrequently upon theſe occaſions, fall out and quarrel with each other. The poor aſtoniſhed negroes were ſo much terrified by theſe proceedings, that ſeveral of them, through fear, climbed over the walls of the court yard, and ran wild about the town; but were ſoon hunted down, and retaken.

While on a former voyage from Africa to Kingſton in Jamaica, I ſaw a ſale there by ſcramble on board a ſnow. The negroes were collected together upon the main and quarter decks, and the ſhip was darkened by ſails ſuſpended over them, in order to prevent the purchaſers from being able to ſee, ſo as to pick or chuſe. The ſignal being given, the buyers ruſhed in, as uſual, to ſeize their prey; when the negroes appeared to be extremely terrified, and near thirty of them jumped into the ſea. But they were all ſoon retaken, chiefly by boats from other ſhips.

On board a ſhip, lying at Port Maria, in Jamaica, I ſaw another ſcramble; in which, as uſual, the poor negroes were greatly terrified. The women, in particular, clang to each other in agonies ſcarcely to be conceived, ſhrieking through exceſs of terror, at the ſavage manner in which their brutal purchaſers ruſhed upon, and ſeized them. Though humanity, one ſhould imagine, would dictate

dictate the captains to apprize the poor negroes of the mode by which they were to be ſold, and by that means to guard them, in ſome degree, againſt the ſurprize and terror which muſt attend it, I never knew that any notice of the ſcramble was given to them. Nor have I any reaſon to think that it is done; or that this mode of ſale is leſs frequent at this time, than formerly.

Various are the deceptions made uſe of in the diſpoſal of the ſick ſlaves; and many of theſe, ſuch as muſt excite in every humane mind, the livelieſt ſenſations of horror. I have been well informed, that a Liverpool captain boaſted of his having cheated ſome Jews by the following ſtratagem: A lot of ſlaves, afflicted with the flux, being about to be landed for ſale, he directed the ſurgeon to ſtop the anus of each of them with oakum. Thus prepared, they were landed, and taken to the accuſtomed place of ſale; where, being unable to ſtand but for a very ſhort time, they are uſually permitted to ſit. The Jews, when they examine them, oblige them to ſtand up, in order to ſee if there be any diſcharge; and when they do not perceive this appearance, they conſider it as a ſymptom of recovery. In the preſent inſtance, ſuch an appearance being prevented, the bargain was ſtruck, and they were accordingly ſold. But it was not long before a diſcovery

a diſcovery enſued. The excruciating pain which the prevention of a diſcharge of ſuch an acrimonious nature occaſioned, not being to be borne by the poor wretches, the temporary obſtruction was removed, and the deluded purchaſers were ſpeedily convinced of the impoſition.

So grievouſly are the negroes ſometimes afflicted with this troubleſome and painful diſorder, that I have ſeen large numbers of them, after being landed, obliged, by the virulence of the complaint, to ſtop almoſt every minute, as they paſſed on.

Treatment

Treatment of the Sailors.

THE evils attendant on this inhuman traffick, are not confined to the purchaſed negroes. The ſufferings of the ſeamen employed in the ſlave-trade, from the unwholeſomeneſs of the climate, the inconveniencies of the voyage, the brutal ſeverity of the commanders, and other cauſes, fall very little ſhort, nor prove in proportion to the numbers, leſs deſtructive to the ſailors than negroes.

The ſailors on board the Guinea ſhips, are not allowed always an equal quantity of beef and pork with thoſe belonging to other merchant ſhips. In theſe articles they are frequently much ſtinted, particularly when the negroes are on board; part of the ſtock laid in for the ſailors, being, as before obſerved, appropriated to their uſe.

With regard to their drink, they are generally denied grog, and are ſeldom allowed any thing but water to quench their thirſt. This urges them, when opportunity offers, at Bonny and other places on the coaſt, to barter their clothes with the natives, for Engliſh brandy, which the Africans obtain, among other articles, in exchange for ſlaves; and they frequently leave themſelves nearly naked, in order to indulge an exceſs in ſpirituous liquors.

In

In this ſtate, they are often found lying on the deck, and in different parts of the ſhip, expoſed to the heavy dews, which in thoſe climates fall during the night; notwithſtanding the deck is uſually waſhed every evening. This frequently cauſes pains in the head and limbs, accompanied with a fever, which generally, in the courſe of a few days, occaſions their death.

The temporary houſe conſtructed on the deck, affords but an indifferent ſhelter from the weather; yet the ſailors are obliged to lodge under it, as all the parts between decks are occupied by, or kept for, the negroes. The cabin is frequently full, and when this is the caſe, or the captain finds the heat and the ſtench intolerable, he quits his cot, which is uſually hung over the ſlaves, and ſleeps in the round-houſe, if there be one, as there is in many ſhips.

The foul air that ariſes from the negroes when they are much crowded, is very noxious to the crew; and this is not a little increaſed by the additional heat which the covering over the ſhip occaſions. The mangrove ſmoke is likewiſe, as before obſerved, productive of diſorders among them.

Nor are they better accommodated after they leave the coaſt of Africa. During the whole of the paſſage to the Weſt-Indies, which in general

laſts ſeven weeks, or two months, they are obliged, for want of room between decks, to keep upon deck. This expoſure to the weather, is alſo found very prejudicial to the health of the ſailors, and frequently occaſions fevers, which generally prove fatal. The only reſemblance of a ſhelter, is a tarpawling thrown over the booms, which even before they leave the coaſt, is generally ſo full of holes, as to afford ſcarce any defence againſt the wind or the rain, of which a conſiderable quantity uſually falls during this paſſage.

Many other cauſes contribute to affect the health of the ſailors. The water at Bonny, which they are obliged to drink, is very unwholeſome; and, together with their ſcanty and bad diet, and the cruel uſage they receive from the officers, tends to impoveriſh the blood, and render them extremely ſuſceptible of putrid fevers and dyſenteries.

The ſeamen, whoſe health happens to be impaired, are diſcharged, on the arrival of the ſhips in the Weſt-Indies; and as ſoon as they get on ſhore, they have recourſe to ſpirituous liquors, to which they are the more prone, on account of being denied grog, or even any liquor but water, during their being aboard; the conſequence of which is, a certain and ſpeedy deſtruction. Numbers likewiſe die in the Weſt-India iſlands, of the

ſcurvy,

ſcurvy, brought on in conſequence of poverty of diet, and expoſure to all weathers.

I am now come to a part of the ſufferings of the ſailors who are employed in the ſlave-trade, of which, for the honour of human nature, I would willingly decline giving an account; that is, the treatment they receive from their officers, which makes no inconſiderable addition to the hardſhips and ailments juſt mentioned, and contributes not a little to rob the nation annually, of a conſiderable number of this valuable body of men. However, as truth demands, and the occaſion requires it, I will relate ſome of the circumſtances of this kind, which fell under my own immediate obſervation, during the ſeveral voyages I made in that line.

In one of theſe, I was witneſs to the following inſtance of cruel uſage: Moſt of the ſailors were treated with brutal ſeverity; but one in particular, a man advanced in years, experienced it in an uncommon degree. Having made ſome complaint relative to his allowance of water, and this being conſtrued into an inſult, one of the officers ſeized him, and with the blows he beſtowed upon him, beat out ſeveral of his teeth. Not content with this, while the poor old man was yet bleeding, one of the iron pump-bolts was fixed in his mouth, and kept there by a piece of rope-yarn tied round

his head. Being unable to ſpit out the blood which flowed from the wound, the man was almoſt choaked, and obliged to ſwallow it. He was then tied to the rail of the quarter-deck, having declared, upon being gagged, that he would jump overboard and drown himſelf. About two hours afterwards he was taken from the quarter deck rail, and faſtened to the grating companion of the ſteerage, under the half deck, where he remained all night with a centinel placed over him.

A young man on board one of the ſhips, was frequently beaten in a very ſevere manner, for very trifling faults. This was done ſometimes with what is termed *a cat*, (an inſtrument of correction, which conſiſts of a handle or ſtem, made of a rope three inches and a half in circumference, and about eighteen inches in length, at one of which are faſtened nine branches, or tails, compoſed of log-line, with three or more knots upon each branch), and ſometimes he was beat with a bamboo. Being one day cruelly beaten with the latter, the poor lad, unable to endure the ſevere uſage, leaped out of one of the gun ports on the larboard ſide of the cabin, into the river. He, however, providentially eſcaped being devoured by the ſharks, and was taken up by a canoe belonging to one of the black traders then lying along-ſide the veſſel. As ſoon as he was brought

brought on board, he was dragged to the quarter-deck, and his head forced into a tub of water, which had been left there for the negroe women to waſh their hands in. In this ſituation he was kept till he was nearly ſuffocated ; the perſon who held him, exclaiming, with the malignity of a demon, " If you want drowning, I will drown you myſelf." Upon my inquiring of the young man, if he knew the danger to which he expoſed himſelf by jumping overboard, he replied, " that he expected to be de-" voured by the ſharks, but he preferred even that, " to being treated daily with ſo much cruelty."

Another ſeaman having been in ſome degree negligent, had a long chain fixed round his neck, at the end of which was faſtened a log of wood. In this ſituation he performed his duty, (from which he was not in the leaſt ſpared) for ſeveral weeks, till at length he was nearly exhauſted by fatigue ; and after his releaſe from the log, he was frequently beaten for trivial faults. Once, in particular, when an accident happened, through the careleſsneſs of another ſeaman, he was tied up, although the fault was not in the leaſt imputable to him, along with the other perſon, and they were both flogged till their backs were raw. Chian pepper was then mixed in a bucket, with ſalt water, and with this the harrowed parts of the back of the

unoffending ſeaman were waſhed, as an addition to his torture.

The ſame ſeaman having at another time accidentally broken a plate, a fiſh-gig was thrown at him with great violence. The fiſh-gig is an inſtrument uſed for ſtriking fiſh, and conſiſts of ſeveral ſtrong barbed points fixed on a pole, about ſix feet long, loaded at the end with lead. The man eſcaped the threatening danger, by ſtooping his head, and the miſſile weapon ſtruck in the barricado. Knives and forks were at other times thrown at him; and a large Newfoundland dog was frequently ſet at him, which, thus encouraged, would not only tear his clothes, but wound him. At length, after ſeveral ſevere floggings, and other ill treatment, the poor fellow appeared to be totally inſenſible to beating, and careleſs of the event.

I muſt here add, that whenever any of the crew were beaten, the Newfoundland dog, juſt mentioned, from the encouragement he met with, would generally leap upon them, tear their clothes, and bite them. He was particularly inveterate againſt one of the ſeamen, who, from being often knocked down, and ſeverely beaten, appeared quite ſtupid, and incapable of doing his duty. In this

this ſtate he was taken on board another ſhip, and returned to England.

In one of my voyages, a ſeaman came on board the ſhip I belonged to, while on the coaſt, as a paſſenger to the Weſt-Indies. He was juſt recovered from a fever, and notwithſtanding this, he was very unmercifully beaten during the paſſage, which, together with the feeble ſtate he was in at the time, rendered him nearly incapable of walking, and it was but by ſtealth, that any medical aſſiſtance could be given to him.

A young man was likewiſe beaten and kicked almoſt daily, for trifling, and even imaginary faults. The poor youth happening to have a very bad toe, through a hurt, he was placed as a centry over the ſick ſlaves, a ſtation which required much walking. This, in addition to the pain it occaſioned, increaſed a fever he already had. Soon after he was compelled, although ſo ill, to ſit on the gratings, and being there overcome with illneſs and fatigue, he chanced to fall aſleep; which being obſerved from the quarter-deck, he was ſoon awakened, and with many oaths, upbraided for neglect of duty. He was then kicked from the gratings, and ſo cruelly beaten, that it was with great difficulty he crawled to one of the officers who was more humane, and complaining of the cruel treatment

he had juſt received, petitioned for a little barley-water (which was kept for the ſick ſlaves) to quench the intolerable thirſt he experienced.

Another ſeaman was knocked down ſeveral times a day for faults of no deep dye. It being obſerved at one time, that the hen coops had not been removed by the ſailors who were then waſhing the deck, nor waſhed under, which it was his duty to ſee done, one of the officers immediately knocked him down, then ſeized and dragged him to the ſtern of the veſſel, where he threw him violently againſt the deck. By this treatment, various parts of his body was much bruiſed, his face ſwelled, and he had a bad eye for a fortnight. He was afterwards ſeverely beaten for a very trifling fault, and kicked till he fell down. When he got on ſhore in the Weſt-Indies, he carried his ſhirt, ſtained with the blood which had flowed from his wounds, to one of the magiſtrates of the iſland, and applied to him for redreſs; but the ſhip being conſigned to one of them, all the redreſs he could procure, was his diſcharge.

Many other inſtances of ſimilar ſeverity might be produced; but the foregoing will ſuffice, to give ſome idea of the treatment ſeamen are liable to, and generally experience in this employ; the conſequence of which is uſually deſertion or death.

Of

Of the former I will give one inſtance. While a ſhip I belonged to lay at Bonny, early one morning near a dozen of the crew deſerted in one of the long boats. They were driven to this deſperate meaſure, as one of them afterwards informed me, by the cruel treatment they had experienced on board. Two of them, in particular, had been ſeverely beaten and flogged the preceding day. One of theſe having neglected to ſee that the arms of the ſhip were kept fit for uſe, was tied up to the mizen ſhrouds, and after being ſtripped, very ſeverely flogged on the back; his trowſers were then pulled down, and the flogging was repeated. The other ſeaman, who was eſteemed a careful, cleanly, ſober fellow, had been puniſhed little leſs ſeverely, though it did not appear that he had been guilty at that time of any fault.

It is cuſtomary for moſt of the captains of the ſlave ſhips to go on ſhore every evening to do buſineſs with the black traders. Upon theſe occaſions many of them get intoxicated, and when they return on board, give proofs of their inebriation, by beating and ill uſing ſome or other of the crew. This was the preſent caſe; the ſeaman here ſpoken of, was beaten, without any reaſon being aſſigned, with a knotted bamboo, for a conſiderable time;

by

by which he was very much bruiſed, and being before in an ill ſtate of health, ſuffered conſiderably.

Irritated by the ill uſage which all of them, in their turn, had experienced, they reſolved to attempt an eſcape, and effected it early in the morning. The perſon on the watch diſcovered, that the net-work on the main deck had been cut, and that one of the long-boats was gone; and, upon farther examination it was found, that near a dozen of the ſeamen were miſſing. A few hours after, the captain went in the cutter in purſuit of the deſerters, but without ſucceſs.

On my return to England, I received from one of them, the following account of their adventures during this undertaking.

When they left the veſſel, they propoſed going to Old Calabar, being determined to periſh, rather than return to the ſhip. All the proviſions they took with them was, a bag containing about half a hundred weight of bread, half a ſmall cheeſe, and a caſk of water of about 38 gallons. They made a ſail of a hammock, and erected one of the boat's oars for a maſt. Thus ſlenderly provided, they dropt down the river of Bonny, and kept along the coaſt; but miſtaking one river for another, they were ſeized by the natives, who ſtripped them, and marched them acroſs the country, for a conſidera-

ble

ble diſtance, to the place to which they themſelves intended going. During the march ſeveral were taken ill, and ſome of them died. Thoſe who ſurvived, were ſold to an Engliſh ſhip which lay there. Every one of theſe deſerters, except three, died on the coaſt, or during their paſſage to the Weſt-Indies; and one of the remaining three died ſoon after his arrival there. So that only two out of the whole number lived to arrive in England, and thoſe in a very infirm ſtate of health.

While I am upon the ſubject of the deſertions among the ſailors, I muſt add, that the captains in this trade generally take out with them tobacco and ſlops, which they ſell at an exorbitant price to the ſailors. And in caſe of their deſertion or deceaſe, they have it in their power to charge to the ſeamens accounts, whatever quantity they pleaſe, without contradiction. This proves an additional reaſon for cruel uſage. In caſe of deſertion, the ſailors forfeit their wages, by which the expences of the voyage are leſſened, and conſequently the merchants reap benefit from it.

The relation juſt given of the barbarities exerciſed by the officers in the ſlave trade, upon the ſeamen under their command, may appear to thoſe who are unacquainted with the method in which this iniquitous branch of commerce is conducted,

to

to be exaggerated. But I can aſſure them, that every inſtance is confined within the ſtricteſt bounds of truth. Many others may likewiſe be brought to prove, that thoſe I have recited are by no means ſingular. Indeed, the reverſe of this conduct would be eſteemed a ſingularity. For the common practice of the officers in the Guinea trade, I am ſorry to ſay it, will, with a very few exceptions, juſtify the aſſertion, that to harden the feelings, and to inſpire a *delight in giving torture* to a fellow creature, is the natural tendency of this unwarrantable traffick. It is but juſtice however, that I except from this general cenſure, one captain with whom I ſailed. Upon all occaſions I found him to be a humane conſiderate man, and ever ready to alleviate the evils attendant on the trade, as far as they were to be leſſened.

The annual diminution of Britiſh ſeamen by all the foregoing cauſes, is what next claims attention, and upon due inveſtigation will be found, I fear, to be much more conſiderable than it is generally ſuppoſed to be. As this is a queſtion of great national importance, and cannot fail to evince the neceſſity of an abolition of the ſlave trade; in order to convey to the public ſome ideas of the deſtructive tendency of it, I will give an account of the ſtatement of the loſs of a ſhip, to which I belonged, during one

one of her voyages. And though this ſtatement may not be conſidered as an average of the loſs upon each voyage, which I have before eſtimated, as I would not wiſh to exceed the mark, at one fourth, and oftentimes one third. I have known inſtances where it has been greatly exceeded, as I ſhall preſently ſhew.

The crew of the ſhip I ſpeak of, upon its departure from England, conſiſted of forty-ſix perſons, excluſive of the captain, chief mate, and myſelf. Out of this number, we loſt on the coaſt eleven by deſertion (of whom only two, and thoſe in a very infirm ſtate, ever arrived in England) and five by death. Three periſhed in the middle paſſage, of whom one was a paſſenger. In the Weſt-Indies, two died, one of which was a paſſenger from Bonny. Five were diſcharged at their own requeſt, having been cruelly treated, and five deſerted, excluſive of two who ſhipped themſelves at Bonny; of theſe ten, ſeveral were in a diſeaſed ſtate; and probably, like moſt of the ſeamen who are diſcharged or deſert from the Guinea ſhips in the iſlands, never returned to their native country. One died in our paſſage from the Weſt-Indies to England; and one, having been rendered incapable of duty, was ſent on board another ſhip while we lay at Bonny.

Thus,

Thus, out of the forty-ſix perſons before-mentioned, only fifteen returned home in the ſhip. And ſeveral, out of this ſmall number, ſo enervated in their conſtitutions, as to be of little ſervice in future; they were, on the contrary, reduced to the mournful neceſſity of becoming burthenſome to themſelves and to others. Of the ten that deſerted, or were diſcharged in the Weſt-Indies, little account can be taken; it being extremely improbable that one half, perhaps not a third, ever returned to this country.

From hence it appears, that there was a loſs in this voyage of thirty-one ſailors and upwards, excluſive of the two ſailors who were paſſengers, and not included in the ſhip's crew. I ſay *a loſs of thirty-one*, for though the whole of this number did not die, yet if it be conſidered, that ſeveral of thoſe who returned to England in the ſhip, or who might have returned by other ſhips, are likely to become a burthen, inſtead of being uſeful to the community, it will be readily acknowledged, I doubt not, that the foregoing ſtatement does not exceed reality.

How worthy of ſerious conſideration is the diminution here repreſented, of a body of people ſo valuable in a commercial ſtate! But how much more alarming will this be, when it appears, as is really the caſe, that the loſs of ſeamen in the voyage I am

ſpeaking

ſpeaking of, is not equal to what is experienced even by ſome other ſhips trading to Bonny and Calabar; and much leſs than by thoſe employed in boating on the Windward Coaſt; where frequently there happens ſuch a mortality among the crew, as not to leave a ſufficient number of hands to navigate the ſhips to the Weſt-Indies. In the year 1786, I ſaw a ſhip, belonging to Miles Barber, and Co. at Cape Monſerado, on the Windward Coaſt, which had loſt all the crew except three, from *boating*; a practice that proves extremely deſtructive to ſailors, by expoſing them to the parching ſun and heavy dews of Africa, for weeks together, while they are ſeeking for negroes up the river, as before deſcribed.

It might naturally be aſked, as ſuch are the dangers to which the ſailors employed in the ſlave trade are expoſed from the intemperature of the climate, the inconveniencies of the voyage, and the treatment of the officers, how the captains are able to procure a ſufficient number to man their ſhips? I anſwer, that it is done by a ſeries of fineſſe and impoſition, aided not only by allurements, but by threats.

There are certain publick-houſes, in which, for intereſted purpoſes, the ſailors are truſted, and encouraged to run in debt. To the landlords of theſe

theſe houſes the captains apply: and a certain number being fixed on, the landlord immediately inſiſts upon their entering on board ſuch a ſhip, threatening, in caſe of refuſal, to arreſt and throw them into priſon. At the ſame time the captain holds out the allurements of a month's pay in advance above the ſhips in any other trade, and the promiſe of ſatisfying their inexorable landlords. Thus terrified on the one hand by the apprehenſions of a priſon, and allured on the other by the promiſed advance, they enter. And by this means a very great proportion of the ſailors in the ſlave trade are procured; only a very ſmall number of landmen are employed. During the ſeveral voyages I have been in the trade, I have not known the number to exceed one for each voyage. The few ſhips that go out in time of war, generally take with them, as other merchant ſhips do, a greater proportion of landmen. And with regard to apprentices, we had not any on board the ſhips I ſailed in, neither to my knowledge have I ever ſeen any. So far is this trade from proving a nurſery for our ſeamen.

By their articles, on entering on board ſome Guinea ſhips, the ſailors are reſtrained, under forfeiture of their wages, from applying, in caſe of ill uſage, to any one for redreſs, except to ſuch perſons as ſhall be nominated by the owners or the captain;

captain; and by others, to commence an action againſt the captain for bad treatment, incurs a penalty of fifty pounds. Theſe reſtrictions ſeem to be a tacit acknowledgment on the part of the owners and captains, that ill treatment is to be expected.

Having ſtated the foregoing facts relative to the nature of this deſtructive and inhuman traffick, I ſhall leave thoſe, whoſe more immediate buſineſs it is, to deduce the neceſſary concluſions; and ſhall proceed to give a few curſory obſervations on thoſe parts of the coaſt of Africa already referred to; confining myſelf to ſuch as tend to an elucidation of the ſlave trade, without entering minutely into the ſtate of the country.

A ſhort Deſcription of ſuch Parts of the Coaſt of Guinea, as are before referred to.

BONNY, or BANNY, is a large town, ſituated in the Bight of Benin, on the Coaſt of Guinea, lying about twelve miles from the ſea, on the eaſt ſide of a river of the ſame name, oppoſite to a town called Peterforte-ſide. It conſiſts of a conſiderable number of very poor huts, built of upright poles, plaiſtered with a kind of red earth, and covered with mats. They are very low, being only one ſtory. The floor is made of ſand, which being conſtructed on ſwampy ground, does not long retain its firmneſs, but requires frequent repair.

The inhabitants ſecure themſelves, in ſome degree, againſt the noxious vapours, which ariſe from the ſwamps and woods that ſurround the town, by conſtantly keeping large wood fires in their huts. They are extremely dirty and indolent; which,

which, together with what they call the *ſmokes*, (a noxious vapour, ariſing from the ſwamps about the latter end of autumn) produces an epidemical fever, that carries off great numbers.

The natives of Bonny believe in one Supreme Being; but they reverence greatly a harmleſs animal of the lizard kind, called a Guana, the body of which is about the ſize of a man's leg, and tapering towards its tail, nearly to a point. Great numbers of them run about the town, being encouraged and cheriſhed by the inhabitants.

The river Bonny abounds with ſharks of a very large ſize, which are often ſeen in almoſt incredible numbers about the ſlave ſhips, devouring with great diſpatch the dead bodies of the negroes as they are thrown overboard. The bodies of the ſailors who die there, are buried on a ſandy point, called Bonny Point, which lies about a quarter of a mile from the town. It is covered at high water; and, as the bodies are buried but a ſmall depth below the ſurface of the ſand, the ſtench ariſing from them is ſometimes very noxious.

The trade of this town conſiſts of ſlaves, and a ſmall quantity of ivory and palm-oil, the latter of which the inhabitants uſe as we do butter; but its chief dependance is on the ſlave trade, in which it

exceeds any other place on the coaſt of Africa. The only water here is rain water, which ſtagnating in a dirty pool, is very unwholeſome. With this, as there is no better to be procured, the ſhips are obliged to ſupply themſelves, though when drank by the ſailors it frequently occaſions violent pains in the bowels, accompanied with a diarrhœa.

THE WINDWARD COAST of AFRICA has a beautiful appearance from the ſea, being covered with trees, which are green all the year. It produces rice, cotton, and indigo of the firſt quality, and likewiſe a variety of roots, ſuch as yams, caſava, ſweet potatoes, &c. &c. The ſoil is very rich, and the rice which it produces, is ſuperior to that of Carolina; the cotton alſo is very fine. It has a number of fine rivers, that are navigable for ſmall ſloops, a conſiderable way up the country.

The natives are a ſtrong hardy race, eſpecially about Setrecrou, where they are always employed in hunting and fiſhing. They are extremely athletic and muſcular, and are very expert in the water, and can ſwim for many miles. They can likewiſe dive to almoſt any depth. I have often thrown pieces of iron and tobacco pipes overboard, which they have never failed bringing up in their hand.

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Their canoes are very ſmall, not weighing above twenty-eight pounds each, and ſeldom carrying above two or three people. It is ſurprizing to ſee with what rapidity they paddle themſelves through the water, and to ſee what a diſtance they venture in them from the ſhore. I have ſeen them eight or nine miles diſtant from it. In ſtormy weather the ſea frequently fills them, which the perſons in them ſeem to diſregard. When this happens, they leap into the ſea, and taking hold of the ends of the canoe, turn her over ſeveral times, till they have emptied her of the chief part of the water; they then get in again, with great agility, and throw out the remainder with a ſmall ſcoop, made for that purpoſe.

They ſell ſome ivory and Malegetta pepper.

They are very cleanly in their houſes, as likewiſe in cooking their victuals. The ivory on this coaſt is very fine, eſpecially at Cape Lahoe. There are on this coaſt ſmall cattle.

The GOLD COAST has not ſo pleaſing an appearance from the ſea, as the Windward coaſt; but the natives are full as hardy, if not more ſo. The reaſon given for this is, that as their country is not ſo fertile as the Windward coaſt, they are obliged to labour more in the cultivation of rice

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and corn, which is their chief food. They have here, as on the Windward coaſt, hogs, goats, fowls, and abundance of fine fiſh, &c. They are very fond of brandy, and always get intoxicated when it is in their power to do ſo. They are likewiſe very bold and reſolute, and inſurrections happen more frequently among them, when on ſhip-board, than amongſt the negroes of any other part of the coaſt.

The trade here is carried on by means of gold-duſt, for which the Europeans give them goods, ſuch as pieces of India chintz, bafts, romals, guns, powder, tobacco, brandy, pewter, iron, lead, copper, knives, &c. &c. After the gold duſt is purchaſed, it is again diſpoſed of to the natives for negroes. Their mode of reckoning in this traffic, is by ounces; thus they ſay they will have ſo many ounces for a ſlave; and according to the number of ſhips on the coaſt, the price of theſe differs.

The Engliſh have ſeveral forts on the Gold coaſt, the principle of which are, Cape Corſe Caſtle, and Anamaboe. The trade carried on at theſe forts is bartering for negroes, which the governors ſell again to the European ſhips, for the article before-mentioned.

The natives, as juſt obſerved, are a bold, reſolute people.

people. During the laſt voyage I was upon the coaſt, I ſaw a number of negroes on Cape Corſe Caſtle, ſome of whom were part of the cargo of a ſhip from London, on whoſe crew they had riſen, and, after killing the captain, and moſt of the ſailors, ran the ſhip on ſhore; but in endeavouring to make their eſcape, moſt of them were ſeized by the natives, and reſold. Eighteen of theſe we purchaſed from Governor Morgue. The Dutch have likewiſe a ſtrong fort on this coaſt, called Elmina, where they carry on a conſiderable trade for ſlaves.

The principal places of trade for negroes, are Bonny and Calabar. The town and trade of Bonny, I have already deſcribed. That of Calabar is nearly ſimilar. The natives of the latter are of a much more delicate frame than thoſe of the Windward and Gold Coaſts.

The natives of Angola are the mildeſt, and moſt expert in mechanicks, of any of the Africans. Their country is the moſt plentiful of any in thoſe parts, and produces different ſorts of grain, particularly calavances, of which they ſeem, when on ſhip-board, to be extremely fond. Here are likewiſe hogs, ſheep, goats, fowls, &c. in great abundance, inſomuch, that when I was at the River Ambris, we could buy a fine fat ſheep for a ſmall

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keg of gunpowder, the value of which was about one ſhilling and ſixpence ſterling. They have alſo great plenty of fine fiſh. I have often ſeen turtle caught, while fiſhing with a net for other fiſh. They have a ſpecies of wild cinnamon, which has a very pungent taſte in the mouth. The ſoil ſeems extremely rich, and the vegetation luxuriant and quick. A perſon might walk for miles in the country amidſt wild jeſſamin trees.

The Portugueſe have a large town on this coaſt, named St. Paul's, the inhabitants of which, and of the country for many miles round, profeſs the Roman Catholick Religion. They are in general ſtrictly honeſt. The town of St. Paul is ſtrongly fortified, and the Portugueſe do not ſuffer any other nation to trade there.

THE END.